infrastructure developments and has programmed to spend Rs. 12,434 crores during the Eleventh Plan (2007-12).

AAI has been mandated to expand and modernize Kolkata and Chennai airports besides developing 35 non-metro airports. In addition, the airports at Delhi and Mumbai have been restructured and are being expanded and modernized through Public Private Partnerships (PPP). Greenfield airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore are being set up through PPP. In principle approvals have been given for new Greenfield airports at Mopa (Goa) and Navi Mumbai. Further, many State Governments are -considering development of several smaller airports.

Air travel situation in North-East

299. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that North East is the most neglected sector of the Civil Aviation industry so are like ageing aircraft, lack of basic facilities at the airports, non-adherence to flight timings etc.;

(b) whether any dedicated steps are contemplated to improve the air travel situation in North-East; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. During the last three years number of flights operated to/from and within North East has increased to 287 flights/week from 169 flights/week. Aircraft which are maintained in airworthiness condition as per the stipulations of manufacturers and approved by the Director General of Civil Aviation are only allowed to operate services. The average age of the fleet of most of the airlines is below 10 years. 22 airports are maintained by Airports Authority of India (AAI) in the North East, out of which 11 are operational. The operational airports are not lacking in basic facilities. Generally the scheduled domestic airlines are adhering to their time schedule.

(b) and (c) Airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by Government. According to these guidelines, all scheduled operators are required to deploy in the North Eastern region, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep (Category-II routes) at least 10% of their deployed capacity on trunk routes (Category-I routes), Further, at least 10% of the capacity thus required to be deployed on Category-II routes, is required to be deployed for connectivity exclusively within these regions.

For development, modernization and upgradation of airports and construction of 3 new Greenfield airports in North-Eastern Region, AAI has projected an expenditure of Rs. 1520 crores for various schemes to be taken up in Eleventh Five Year Plan.

Out of the eleven non-operational airports in NER, action is in hand to prepare detailed project report to opertaionalize 8 airports *viz.* Passighat, Tezu, Along,

Daparizo, Ziro, Kamalpur, Kailashahar and Tura. Feasibility study is being conducted for two new Greenfield airports at Kokrajhar and Tawang.

Modernisation of Kolkata airport

300. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that work on modernisation of Kolkata airport is moving at a snail's pace;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to speed up the tempo of work on this airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Training of pilots

†301. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a scaling down of pilot training;

(b) whether private companies train their pilots through their own system, or through any Centrally provided Government system;

(c) whether the system is standardized by Government if training is provided by themselves; and

(d) the details of pilots training system in view of increasing number of flight services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PI'AFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. Flying training in the country is imparted as per the syllab is prescribed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Flying Training Institutes which imparts this training, operate under regulations prescribed by the DGCA.

(b) and (c) After obtaining a licence on completion of the the prescribed training, pilots are further trained for aircraft type endorsement by private companies through their own system. Training is conducted by approved examiners as per the training manual.

(d) Scheduled and non-scheduled operators carry out conversion training of their pilots at their own training establishments or manufacturer's training facilities. Indian Airlines have their own ground simulator training facilities at CTE, Hyderabad. Air India and Jetlite have got similar facilities at Mumbai.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.